FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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Words of Wisdom

Marvel! a garden among the flames.
My heart has become receptive of every form.
It is a meadow for gazelles, a monastery for monks,
An abode of idols, the Ka'ba of the circumambulator,
The tables of the Torah, the book of the Koran.
My religion is love, wherever its camel-mounts turn.
Love is my belief, my faith.

Ibn' Arabi

As for Mary, she was little more than a child when the angel came to her; she had not lost her child's creative acceptance of the realities moving on the other side of the everyday world. We lose our ability to see angels as we grow older, and that is a tragic loss.

Madeline L'Engle

The diamond cannot be polished without friction,
nor man perfected without trials.

Chinese Proverb

God is so high you can't get above Him
God is so low you can't get beneath Him
God is so wide you can't get around Him
You'd better come in by the gate.

Old Negro Spiritual

Heaven abides; earth lasts.
They last and abide
By not living for themselves.
Hence they live forever.

Lao Tzu

God becomes as we are, that we may become as He is.

William Blake

Editorial

Dear God, please help me with this work. By all accounts this work is your work. All work is your work. Please help me to keep my mind and my vision centered on you. How well I know now that I need you. You are the beginning and the end and everything in between. Thank you for loving me so much.

So many days I walk down the driveway to collect our mail and watch out for the puddles in the ruts in the driveway. So many days I see them just as places to get my feet wet and ruin my shoes. I watch to avoid them. For so long I didn't see the puddle, only a dark place warning me of wetness, a possible disruption of my day.

An then I began to see the puddle, and the vision of treetops and sky which shone back on the surface stopped me in my somnolent march to the mailbox. This water which fills the uneveness in the road reflects the sky, heaven. So it is with people: often the ones who occupy themselves with the filling-in and evening out might just provide a place to unsettle my day. Often I don't look at them, don't see or acknowledge them as people, or receive the gift of their stories. Like the puddle, their vision points out the parameters of their lives and my own, and often reflects more of sky-ward vision.

Puddles remind me of God. When depressed or tired I find myself looking down, but even on the ground there is a reflection of the sky. God puts reminders in my path if I will just see them as such, and not as places to be avoided because I might get my feet wet.

So often I find myself falling into the trap of expecting God to make my life orderly, regular – as if order would reflect my blessedness, or God's love for me, or the high attainment of my relationship to Thou. But God teaches me so much while I wait for the car to be fixed: otherwise I might never have seen that the bare branches of a winter tree look like lace against the sky. Or that lady carrying her one bag of worldly goods down a New York City street, the vision of her might never have preached to me a sermon about humility – how knowing God means that I am inextricably caught up with life on this planet, and opens up new space in me for wondering what my work must be. Sickness teaches me how lucky I was to be well, and often I feel that God is making time for me to watch those things which don't change, when my body does.

The line of branches against a sunset sky touched me because space was made in my day to make me see them. Beauties lie all around our lives waiting to be discovered. I stand still and the puddle offers me a vision of the sky. God teaches me through the ordinary objects of my day, puddles and trees, and people. As the angels said, "Do not be afraid, for unto you is born, *this day,* in the city of David, a savior, which is Christ the Lord."

K.L.H.

Readers are encouraged to send us the names and addresses of those who would like to receive future issues of Fellowship in Prayer. This bi-monthly publication is available at no charge to anyone who requests it. Please write or telephone our office during business hours: Fellowship in Prayer, 134 Franklin Corner Road, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648. Telephone (609) 896-3636. We will be happy to hear from you.

Welcome

In this house, the things of God aren't caged
or bashful. They don't pretend to be content.

In the ordinary objects of this house,
you touch the elements of mystery.

Saints and angels, that gang of kibbitzers and reconcilers,
ache to instruct the living. They need liasons.

Visions bang the ceiling with muscular
crooked wings. Sit still. They'll light on you.

Silent prayers press against the edge of utterance.
They dream of inhabiting syllables, projected.

Miracles crouch under tables, wonder
if your hands can be trusted for healing.

Bowls of water, bells, beads, all possessed,
all desire to unleash insight.

Acquiesce. Believer, stay as long as you can.

–Paul Jolly

From our Readers

In your letter you asked about my spiritual experiences here in Indonesia. Yes, I am growing spiritually stronger here, but not in ways that I had anticipated. Before coming here, I was caught up on the myth we in the West so often have that the East is a very spiritual place, which is lived out in the daily lives of the people here. Such may be the case in isolated communities here, as it is in the West, but in general life here is very earthbound, cruel, and selfish. It is a true "survival of the fittest" where those with any inkling of power or authority exploit others to the utmost. Basically, people here are greedy, selfish, egotistical exploiters who seek any opportunity to take from others so as to increase their own sense of power. There is NO concept here of equality or of people's having a right to live lives of respect. There is NO sensitivity to the position of others. Yes, Indonesians in general are very polite and refined – especially the Javanese. Behind those manners lie very cruel feelings or feelings of hopelessness. It's not just the rich exploiting the poor, but also the poor exploiting the poor, the rich the rich.

Living here has been extremely difficult for me, a product of middle class America. I have been and am continuously shocked by what goes on here overtly and covertly, I am learning appearances are Not reality. However, I am also seeing the essence, the soul of the person that lies deeper than any up-bringing, values, or behavior they may have. I'm learning such basic lessons as TOLERANCE, ACCEPTANCE, FORGIVENESS (It is my own values that require me to forgive what I see and experience here). And through them I am cutting through basic human greed for power and touching the spiritual element in all of us which unites us all on a cosmic level. I am learning and experiencing LOVE, not selfish love, not individual love, but cosmic LOVE that unifies, that binds, that never ends, that extends deeper and stronger than anything we in our small beings can comprehend or even imagine in our wildest hopes or dreams. Cultures create diversity, but the true essence of life extends deeper than that – much, much deeper – and comes from a Oneness uniting all.

Jarkarta
Indonesia

"Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" cried the Psalmist. "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I made my bed in hell, behold Thou art there."

In the movie, "Oh God," the Almighty (portrayed by George Burns) appears to John Denver while he is standing before the lavatory shaving, clad only in a towel. I suspect that the Lord delights in coming to us in unusual circumstances and unexpected places, perhaps because He knows that it is then that we are most open and vulnerable to Him.

Once I had gotten up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom only to discover that there was no toilet paper on the roll. It had been one of my pet peeves for years that nobody else in our family ever replaced the roll but rather always seemed to leave it for me to do. I was sitting there still half asleep, feeling very resentful and sorry for myself when all at once I distinctly heard His voice say, "Serve the Lord with gladness." I had to laugh at His sense of humor even as I realized that He was teaching me a very important lesson – that serving Him may sometimes consist in doing great and noble deeds, but more often the opportunity comes in seemingly insignificant chores done with a sense of gladness and praise. Ever since that night I have found myself no longer griping inwardly and outwardly about always having to replace the paper but rather doing it with a smile.

Anne Amerson
Dahlonega, Georgia

Please connect me with your fellowship and send me information, including the bi-monthly publication I heard about from the Wider Quaker Fellowship.

May you all ways know the peace and favor of Her in whose service is true liberty.

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Reconsidering The Mystical

By Michael Sells

Michael Sells reclaims the mystical for ordinary people. His article interweaves the teachings of three mystical masters from Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. All three traditions contribute to a language of mystical dialectic which actually provides the process for escaping the self's desire to control experience through images.

"Reconsidering the Mystical" is revised and reprinted with permission from Haverford Horizons, *Summer, 1985. Michael Sells was appointed assistant professor of religion at Haverford College in 1984. He teaches courses on Islam, Eastern religions, and comparative mysticism. Calligraphy in this article was provided by Stuart Thomas.*

"Mystic fleeces elderly widow of life savings." This recent headline reminded me of a headline from the last presidential primaries: " 'I am not a mystic,' Hart declares." These words in turn recall the declaration of a former president, "I am not a crook," though being considered a crook might well be less harmful to a candidate's electoral chances than being considered a mystic. The term "mystic" also shows up in accounts of religious terrorism, and in philosophical criticism of muddled thinking. When used positively it usually refers to a spiritual or intellectual "superstar" who has little relevance for us mere mortals.

You may have guessed that I will propose a different evaluation. My research into mystical writing of different religious and cultural traditions leads me to a reconsideration of the importance and the relevance of the mystical side of life, and to a critique of its denigration in contemporary society.

A remarkable combination of intensity, precision and openness can be seen in the Sufi Ibn' Arabi, known as the grand master of Islamic mystical philosophy (d. 1240 C.E., Damascus). According to Ibn' Arabi, the intellect, with its rules of logic and reference, is a valued and necessary means of understanding. However, a fundamental error occurs when such limited logic is applied to the unlimited. This application results in "binding," the narrowing of the unlimited into one's own limited and particular notion of the truth. Fixation on a particular notion leads to spiritual stagnation and to a world of conflicting beliefs.

Ibn' Arabi held that many philosophical, religious and mystical beliefs contained a manifestation of the unlimited or real. To deny the truth of others, what Quakers might call that of God in everyone, was for him a denial of the divine manifest in the various beliefs. To worship one's own limited

image of the divine, the "god" of one's belief, was true idolatry.

Ibn' Arabi posed a new logic, the logic of the perpetual transformation of the human heart. In each moment, the Sufi gives up all images of the divine (and in this sense gives up the ego self in the Sufi state of fana,' of passing away in the divine), to become completely open, to receive the next image. The logic of "either I'm right or you're right" gives way to the seeing of the divine in every moment and everyone. This experience is called "love madness": the Sufi is driven out of normal delimited categories of logic by the intensity of the experience.

Ibn' Arabi's central symbol is the polished mirror. When one looks at a smudged mirror, one sees a mirror. When the mirror is polished a shift occurs: the mirror is no longer seen, only the image reflected in it. For Ibn' Arabi, the mirror is the human heart. When the images and desires projected by the ego self pass away and the mirror is polished, the image of the divine is reflected. The divine and human are one in that image. When Ibn' Arabi states that "it sees in it(self) its mystery" the unresolvable paradox that underlies the polished mirror image breaks apart the normal subject/object, reflexive/non-reflexive structures of language. The question "who sees whom in whom" leads to a never ending series of shifting references and paradoxes.

Mysticism is usually associated with extraordinary personalities and experiences. Yet many mystics felt that the extraordinary lies not beyond the everyday but within it. Ibn' Arabi called the highest station the station of no-station, the station that sees every transformation of the heart, however humble, as being the one eternal transformation – the polishing of the mirror – that always has occurred and always is occurring.

Meister Eckhart, the Dominican mystic (d. 1327), believed that the just act, any just act, however "small," was nothing other than the birth of the son of God in the soul of the one engaged in that act, since for him that birth is the one and only just act that, again, always has occurred and always is occurring. Thus even the humblest act of justice is an event of miraculous, even cosmic proportions, on whom "God's being depends." For Eckhart, this birth can only be achieved when the soul is devoid of its own images and desires, when it achieves a "virgin" state. At that moment the soul gives birth to the Son. In another Eckhartian image, the soul must be silent for the divine word to speak to it and through it.

These concepts are deeply paradoxical. It is only through grace that the soul can give up its images and desires and become purely receptive and thus give birth to the Son. But at other times Eckhart speaks of grace as the birth of the Son itself. This paradox reflects the Eckhartian notion of the trinity as the "self-birth" of the divine. The infinite regress within the image of something giving birth to itself transforms normal notions of causality. The mystical transformation occurs when the paradox does not allow the mind to settle on usual notions of cause and effect but opens up our perception to mystery, to wonder. Questions of free will and grace, or the relation of the eternal to the temporal world, are revealed as logically unresolvable. The mystical dialectic is a continual contemplative movement ever deeper into the mystery that underlies such questions.

Justus in perpetuum vivet

Der gerehte ensuochet niht in sînen werken; wan die iht suochent in irn werken, die sint knehte und mietlinge, oder die umbe einie warumbe würkent. Dar umbe, wilt dû în- und übergebildet werden in die gerehticheit, sô enmeine niht in dînen werken und enbilde kein warumbe in dich, noch in zît noch in êwicheit, noch lôn noch sælicheit, noch diz noch daz; wan disiu werk sint alliu wærlîche tôt. Ja, und bildest dû got in dich, swaz dû werke dar umbe würkest, diu sint alliu tôt.

THE JUST WILL LIVE ETERNALLY

. . .the just seek nothing with their works. Those who seek something with their works are sevants and hirelings, working for their "why" and "for what." If you wish to be in-formed and trans-formed into justice, do not intend anything with your works, and form no "for what" in yourself, neither in time nor in eternity, neither reward nor blessedness, neither this nor that. Such works are in truth dead. Yes, even if it is God that you form in yourself, whatever works you do for this reason are all dead.

Vita vero sive vivere est talis operatio, utpote non ab extra sed ab intus et intimis procedens.... Hinc est quod illa opera omnia et sola, quae deus in nobis operatur et nos in illo et propter illum, utpote intimum, viva sunt.

. . .True life or living is the kind of process that proceeds not from something exterior, but from within, from the deepest interior. . . those works and only those works that God does in us, and we in God and account of God as deep within, are alive. . .

Meister Eckhart, from German Sermon 39

Ibn' Arabi and Eckhart came from different cultures and different religious and philosophical contexts. Yet they both seek ways to share their experience of the Eternal without falling into the trap of language's 'conceptual boxes.' They share a mystical dialectic that allows expression, but without binding, of the religious meaning of their respective tradions.

Another strand of the mystical tradition is the Jewish mystical classic, the Zohar. The Zohar states that it is the moment of repentance that is most dangerous, that can give birth to evil. This statement warns us that the language of repentance, even the notion of 'giving up,' has dangers, because the self seeps in and seeks to possess at every opportunity. The self can attempt to 'bind' even the experience of giving up binding. Yet the mystical experience cannot be reduced to precepts or concepts; it is a never-completed process. Language can never capture this process, but must be continually renewed by experience.

To use the term "mystery" today is to invite criticism, since the popular notion of mystery implies the acceptance of something, such as a church, creed, or dogma, without understanding. The mystical philosophers describe

mystery as the process or act of being taken beyond our usual taken-for-granted world. Though mystery lies at the heart of mystical dialectic, its meaning is utterly opposed to the acceptance of beliefs on the basis of an authority.

The medieval philosophers had promised that careful use of reason could dispel perplexity. The mystical philosophers agreed as long as the perplexity spoken about was that caused by lack of logical precision. They made careful use of philosophy. However, the notion that the ultimate meaning of life could be captured without perplexity was for them the primary intellectual error, an error shared by the religious and non-religious alike. By focusing on the unresolvable paradox involved in any reference to the unlimited, they engender what Ibn' Arabi calls "mystical perplexity" and Plotinus calls "thauma" or "wonderment." To put aside one's limited notions requires faith, not faith in "anything", but the faith to become totally receptive, to give up the images posed by the limitations of language and the projections of the ego. It is to risk nothingness. But it is also to open oneself up to that experience of wonderment which for mystical philosophers is the primary experience of being human and being alive.

The mystical logic that is both the cause and the result of wonderment allows the self to see the other not as a threat but as an affirmation. Through it, religions can affirm distinctiveness not by denying or condescending to the truths of other religions, but by affirming them as other. A good community, one that is somehow united and "one," fosters the most individuality in its members. The more they are different, the more each person is her or himself, the more the community is one. A false community, a clique, attempts to achieve unity by making everyone the same. There is no unity, only homogeneity. By focusing on a unity beyond delimitation, mystical dialectic offers an alternative to those who define and limit the essence of religions, and those who call into question the possibility of communication between religious traditions.

Mystical dialectic contains a moral and philosophical critique of dogmatism that is just as stringent as great atheistic critiques. (Those crtiques show little awareness that the "god" they are criticizing has been criticized from within mystical traditions). But it doesn't stop there, nor does it advocate silence as is often claimed. It operates within a linguistic and cultural context, and it is only from a point within that context that its silence, or its moment of moving beyond delimited reference, becomes meaningful. Objective language is transformed into a language of realization. What cannot be said objectively must be realized – that is, simultaneously understood and actualized within.

The mystical tradition has been repressed through inquisitions, and ignored (a more successful form of repression) in more modern times. Yet it offers much. The language of mystical dialectic takes on meaning within religious and cultural traditions, but continually moves beyond the facade of rationalistic and religious dogmatisms. At its best, the language of mystical dialectic transcends the split between the mind and the heart, continually renewing, from within, diverse religious and cultural traditions.

Repetition

an exerpt from a talk by
Eknath Easwaran

One of the most universal forms of prayer, and one of the simplest, is the silent repetition of the name of God. Many of us learned this practice in our childhoods, and find that it surfaces and helps us in times of trouble and stress. In India, it is called the mantram, and here or anywhere it serves as an important part of the inward life.

On festival days in India you will often see a huge elephant, caparisoned in gold and gorgeous cloth, carrying an image of the Lord on its back through the village streets. Everyone enjoys the sight: the musicians with their drums and cymbals in front, then the beast slowly lumbering along and the devotees behind, all on their way to the temple.

But there can be one difficulty. Stalls of fruits, vegetables, and sweets line the narrow, crooked streets, and the trunk of an elephant, as you may know, rarely stays still. It sways back and forth, up and down, constantly. So when the procession comes abreast of a fruit stall, the elephant seizes a shelled coconut or two, opens his cavernous mouth, and tosses them in. At another stall the big fellow twists his trunk round a bunch of bananas suspended from the roof. The mouth opens again, the whole bunch goes in with a thud . . . you hear a gulp . . . and that's the end of it.

The humble people who own these stalls cannot afford this kind of loss, and to prevent it the man in charge, the mahout, asks the elephant to grasp a firm bamboo shaft in his trunk. Though not sure why, the elephant, out of love for his mahout, does as he is told. Now the procession can pass safely through the streets. The elephant steps right along with his stick held upright in a steady trunk, not tempted to feast on mangoes or melons because he has something to hold on to.

The human mind is rather like the trunk of an elephant. It never rests . . . it goes here, there, ceaselessly moving through sensations, images, thoughts, hopes, regrets, impulses. Occasionally it does solve a problem or make necessary plans, but most of the time it wanders at large, simply because we do not know how to keep it quiet or profitably engaged.

But what should we give it to hold on to? For this purpose I recommend the systematic repetition of the mantram, which can steady the mind at any time and in any place.

Living the Spiritual Life

The woman who called herself Peace Pilgrim walked more than 25,000 miles, carrying in her blue tunic her only possessions. For nearly three decades, she walked across the United States with the vow "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food." With no organizational backing whatsoever, Peace Pilgrim walked as a prayer and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work with her for peace.

In the beginning I undertook my walking not only to contact people, I undertook it as a prayer discipline to keep me concentrated on my prayer for peace. I hadn't learned yet to pray without ceasing. I also undertook a forty-five day period of prayer and fasting as a prayer discipline.

After the first few years the prayer discipline was completely unnecessary, because I had learned *to pray without ceasing.* I made the contact so thoroughly that into my prayer consciousness I put any condition or person in the world I am concerned about and the rest takes place automatically.

Occasionally some condition is brought back into my conscious mind because I need to really concentrate on it. If some person is in dire difficulty, and that person returns to my mind for thought, I sometimes use the prayer of visualization, which has always been very natural for me, but I understand not so for everybody. I reach out – my divine nature reaches out – to contact their divine nature. Then I have the feeling of lifting them, lifting them, lifting them, and I have the feeling of bringing God's light to them. I try to envision them bathed in God's light, and finally I do see them standing and reaching out their arms bathed in golden light. At that point I leave them in God's hands.

Tales of the Wise and Foolish

ABOUT PRIMING THE PUMP

(A short homily illustration relating to Prayer)

Out in California in a desert store is a letter mounted under glass. It had been found in a baking powder can tied to a rusty water pump.

"This pump was all right as of June, 1932," it reads. "I put a new sucker washer into it and it ought to last five years.

"But the washer dries out and the pump has to be primed.

"Under the white rock I buried a bottle of water, out of the sun and cork end up. There's enough water in it to prime the pump, but not if you drink some first.

"Pour about one fourth in and let her soak to wet the leather. Then pour the rest in medium fast and pump like blazes. You'll get water. The well never runs dry. Have faith.

"When you get watered up, fill the bottle and put it back like you found it for the next feller." /s/ Desert Pete

P.S. "DON'T GO DRINKING THE WATER FIRST. Prime the pump with it and you'll get all you can hold. And the next time you pray, remember that God is like this pump. He has to be primed. I've given my last dime away a dozen times to prime the pump of my prayers, and I've fed my last bean to a stranger while saying amen. It never failed to get me an answer. You got to git your heart fixed to give before you can give to. Pete"

AN AFTER THOUGHT! What does the above have to do with prayer? Well, that's the homily, and that's your job, but this certainly will give your some pretty good ideas.

Patricia Smith clipped this article from a local newspaper in Valley View, Texas.

ANOTHER WELL-NESS STORY

1 When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Gospel according to John — Chapter 4, Verses 1-24.

Maverick Christian

by Evelyne Lein

My grandfather farmed the land, a man of the soil whose magical touch made all things grow. Grandmother, a queen of culinary talents, wore her title of homemaker proudly. Dad excelled at building highways. My mother's avocating was as an artist-pianist. Sister is a nurse, brother an army man. I chose a career in the banking profession. Our hobbies, as siblings, vary. There is almost an even distribution of democrats and republicans among our family. Each of the members developed independent thinking; likes and dislikes. Select any controversial issue of the day and a good debate follows. In addition, we all possess capricious emotional temperaments.

Yet for generations, family members born into our specific religious beliefs have embraced this life experience without question or deviation. We did not agree with Grandfather on all issues, but no one questioned his religion. At times, we thought Mother and Father made a wrong decision, but never in their religious choices. Different lifestyles and variances in other areas are accepted within the family. This has led me to observe, generally speaking, that an individual's impetus to explore other professions or thinking is frequently missing when it comes to religion. Occasionally, I've noticed an individual investigating another religious philosophy because of some driving force within him. Sometimes, marriage to a person with different beliefs may prompt a change, but this difference just as often spawns disagreements, based on the individual's inherited doctrines. Many people, after exploration, return to the religions of their fathers, finding that this is also their own path. Sometimes individuals find another religious path more suited to their particular temperament, or deeper conviction. On the whole however, observing all my associations, those who actually are moved to "seek and find" are rare.

Perhaps rarer are those who experience "something" in relation to God. This was very true in my own life. Corporate conformity, ritual, and restless thinking had taken the place of any silent communion with God. As a conformist, Henry David Thoreau's words applied to me – "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation." . . . So it was until I began the search of what I really believed.

I became a "maverick Christian". Was it in my stars, or my Karma? I always possessed an inquisitive nature, wanting to know why the sky was blue, how electricity came through the wall, and why my skin was white. Taking a step further, I was prompted me to ask, "Why is my friend born a cripple and I am not?" And so it was natural, I suppose, to begin a search for answers. However, I discovered that it is not enough to be curious. One must be fearless, even willing to leave one's inherited beliefs for a time. One must trust that a God who created us, sanctions our search for Him, however the way.

The beauty, then, of philosophical exploration is that one must come full circle, face to face with exactly what one's beliefs are. It is possible that our beliefs become richer when we search for and define them, rather than just receiving them in childhood from others. Indeed, the chance exists that one could saunter through his religious life and not discover what he inwardly truly believes. I wonder, are we then abidicating our responsibility if we do not "seek and find" for ourselves? In John Oxenham's profound words:

"To every man there openeth
A Way, and Ways, and A Way,
And the High Soul Climbs the High Way,
And the Low Soul gropes the Low
In between, on the misty flats,
The rest drift to and fro.
But to every man there openeth
A High Way and a Low.
And, every man decideth
The Way his soul shall go."

And so I drifted for some part of my life, loosely keeping my father's religion, becoming involved in family and career. Yet, in retrospect, I can see that at certain crossroads in my life a happening or an individual became the catalyst which primed my spiritual search. At nineteen, a landlady sowed the seeds by giving me a copy of Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*. However fascinating the words, they were little understood. I thought she was a wise, cosmopolitan woman and she tossed bits of philosophy my way. At others of life's intersections, I met metaphysicians and teachers who invited me to lectures, or suggested a book. I perused the books, attended the lectures, but was not fully ready to activate my search or make the preparations for a spiritual journey. Little did I realize this spiritual journey begins at our birth. All our exertion towards happiness is only a screen for our soul's longing for completeness with God. Like the prodigal, I wandered in the wilderness of the world, leaving the Father's house at times. Now, I know if we leave Him, His Presence is ever with us in our search. Eventually my feet, like the prodigal's, turned homeward.

It has been a long journey. On the way, I have stood whitegowned at my Christian confirmation ceremony. I have also enjoyed a close friendship with a Hindu Swami. But, I am content now. I have searched. In this search I have rededicated myself, with understanding, to Christ, my Ideal. I have been aided in the search by teachers, study, prayer, meditation and intuition. (God can be felt through the heart, but the head and heart must work in unison.)

And, what have I come to know on this search?

1. God projected me from Himself. He has a definite purpose for my existence. My goal on this spiritual journey is to return in consciousness to my Father and realize my oneness with Him. Discipline of self, following my Ideal, selfless service, prayer and meditation assist me towards my goal.

2. All souls are evolving towards God, through many spiritual paths and religions. (The word religion is from the Latin word "religere", to bind back) For most, the journey is long, therefore the soul is eternal. Each soul has unique challenges, that help it evolve.

3. God is good; benevolent. All so-called appearances of evil have within them a beneficent purpose or learning. My human conditions, or experiences, result from the law of cause and effect. My will helps create my destiny, I am my own responsibility. To know this is to travel the journey in acceptance and to know that nothing ever happens to me that is not in the best interest of my soul.

4. I am a separate soul, yet as a wave is one with other waves and the ocean, I am a part of all others and God. I affect and am affected by all. Therefore, my acceptance of the law of oneness is crucial. I must strive for the elimination of separateness in thinking, acknowleging my brotherhood with those of other races, creeds or doctrines. The core of Divinity resides in all, and as He guides, I walk my own spiritual path.

5. All altars are not in churches. God does not confine Himself inside the blocked walls of one religious institution. How can He, when he is worshiped in all? I accept that for my development, I was born in the west as a Christian. Using that heritage as a foundation, I can discover truth in this and other religious beliefs. Ultimate truth transcends doctrine.

6. Truth is anything I discover and diligently apply which is instrumental in bringing my conscious mind to the realization of oneness with God. The more definite this becomes the more I realize the spiritual world is the only reality. That which is transitory, the life scenes of today, pass away as unreality.

7. No one can issue "instant enlightenment" certificates. A teacher can guide, uplift and encourage and provide the example for enlightenment. His life is of high value as it proves that all aspirants can evolve to greated spiritual heights. Saviours come to lift the world and its inhabitants of some of our Karma. So, indeed I have a Saviour.

8. If I take one step towards God in my search for, and surrender to Him, He will take one hundred towards me. To acknowledge His Spirit within me and trust it, is to receive help from It. One can thus be religious without doctrine, communing with and following the Spirit within.

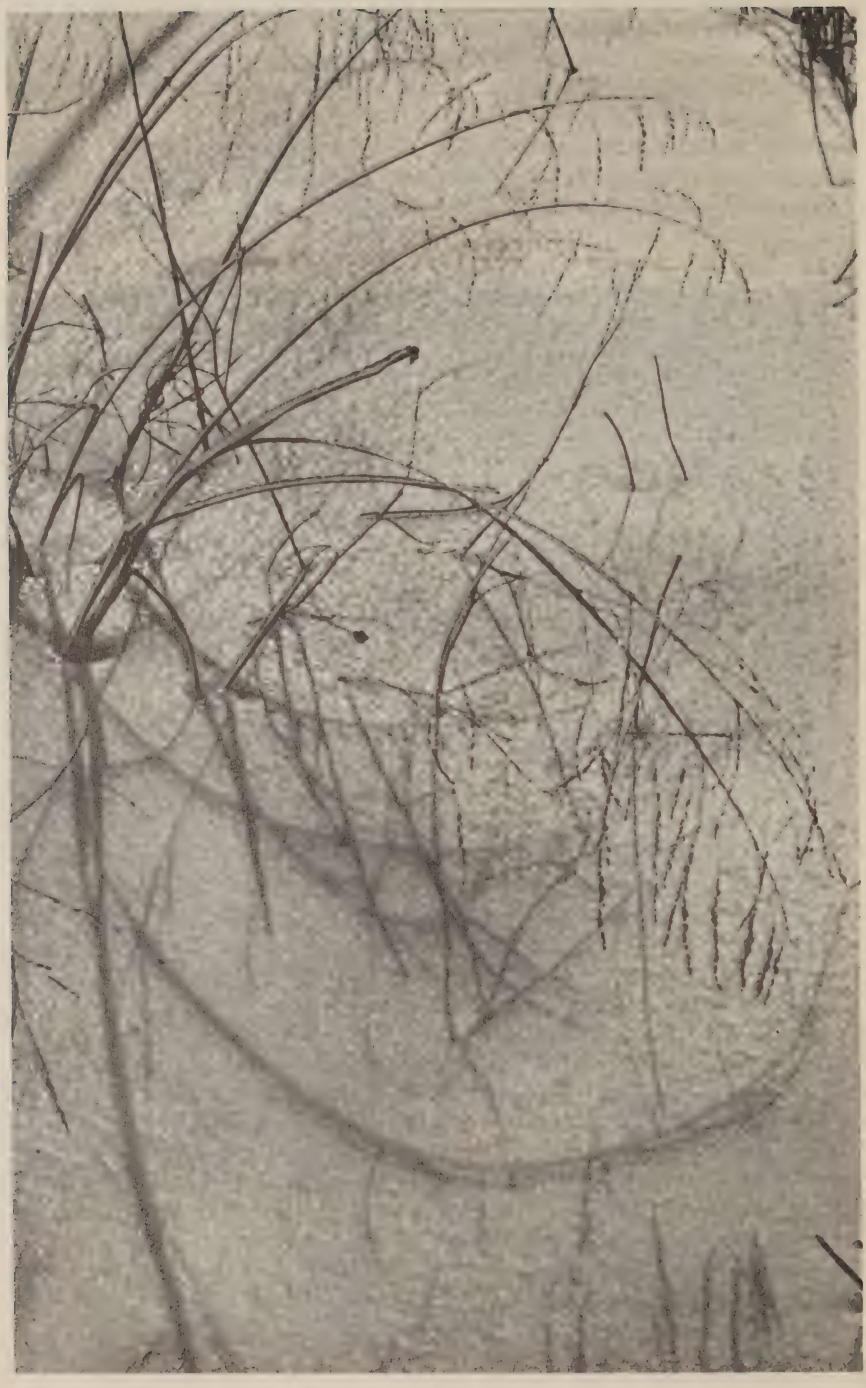
9. The test of my religion is its relevancy to sustain me no matter what happens. Is it giving me the faith and serenity to accept what life brings? Is it developing an intimate relationship with God?

10. Souls are sometimes forced by life to help carry the burdens of another. If this opportunity is acepted in love, it provides a launching pad towards greater soul growth in the individual. "Help thine brother's boat across, and lo, thine own has reached the shore," states the Hindu proverb.

Selfless service of mankind is imperative in evolving the individual soul.

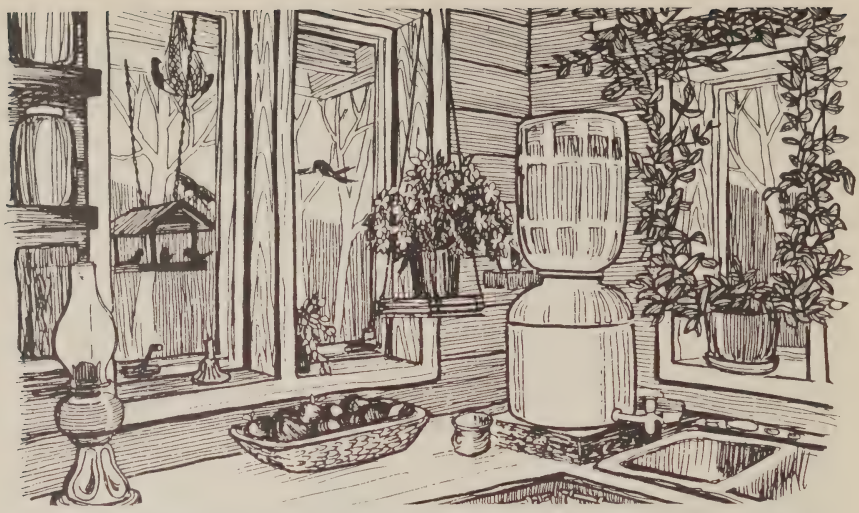
"Seek and you shall find," are the Master Christ's words. (Matt. 7:7) The statement is a directive, so we cannot ignore it. It is my belief that we are here invited to have a searching, open mind and heart in order "to decide the way our soul shall go."

With a childlike faith in God, one cannot fail in the call of his heart and mind to start the spiritual journey back to His Father. Until we do, as St. Augustine writes, "Our souls will be restless until they repose in Thee."



Psalm 139

LORD, you have searched me out and known me;
you know my sitting down and my rising up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You trace my journeys and resting-places
and are aquainted with all my ways.
Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,
but you, O LORD, know it altogether.
You press upon me behind and before
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain to it.
Where can I go then from your Spirit?
where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there your hand will lead me
and your right hand hold me fast.
If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
Darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day;
darkness and light to you are both alike.
For you yourself created my inmost parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
I will thank you because I am marvelously made;
your works are wonderful, and I know it well.
My body was not hidden from you,
while I was being made in secret
and woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes beheld my limbs, yet unfinished in the womb;
all of them were written in your book;
they were fashioned day by day,
when as yet there was none of them.
How deep I find your thoughts, O God!
how great is the sum of them!
If I were to count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
to count them all, my life span would need to be like yours.



Spirituality and Everyday Life

If you would like to share your meditations with other members of the Fellowship, do not hesitate to write. But be sure to keep your writing straightforward and brief (no more than four typewritten pages, or about 1,000 words). We have found that simply sharing the experience of God's love and reality can begin a process of transformation in our own lives and the lives of others. The same may be true for you.

Cate McQuaid graduated from Vassar College in May of this year, and is 22 years old. She was brought up Catholic. Her visit to a Hindu ashram in upstate New York brought forth a strong reaction which caused her to write this letter to her friend Elizabeth.

from a letter to Elizabeth, 8/13-14-15-16/85

by Catherine McQuard

Yesterday was a beautiful day for travel, and I was letting the healthy breezes of being on the road air out my worries. But the trip took a good five hours – which is a lot in this region of the country – and I got to feeling tired toward the NY border. By the time we crossed the Hudson, I was feeling wary of this whole Siddha Yoga / gurus thing. What is supposed to happen when you are near the gurus, or even in this ashram – which is the US center for Siddha Yoga, second only to the ashram in Ganeshpuri, India – is called shakti. Shakti is the aura or energy the gurus and the ashram possess, and my coming into their presence would pass on to me some shakti. Although this is 'good' for me, you never know what effect it will have. I'm making it sound like a drug, which is completely inaccurate. Undoubtedly Jesus had

shakti, too. And what happens, I guess, is that you are closer to your emotions, you have more opportunity to sort through them and grow. Shakti – the experience – makes you feel, and it makes you think.

Now, speaking objectively, I have felt and thought a good deal this past 24 hours, but I can't say for sure whether it had to do with coming in contact with the gurus or more coming in contact with the concept of the gurus (there are two of them, a brother and sister, Indian, in their 20s, who were schooled by the previous guru, Muktananda, who, in turn, had his own guru, Nityananda – the line of gurus goes very far back), if you see what I mean.

Whatever the case, I began to get nervous as we approached the ashram. Esther, I think, kind of lost me in her eagerness to be at the ashram. I told her I felt uncomfortable, and she didn't really hear me. But she said that she wanted me to experience this, to see the gurus, because they were so important to her life and she wanted to share this with me. I began to feel as if I wanted to catch the next bus to Manhattan. But I got registered and took my stuff down to my room in the annex. Then straight back to the ashram for the program. On line for the program, as I was going in, and during the introductory chant, I was told I shouldn't be wearing shorts. Luckily, Esther had a prayer shawl, but my immediate reaction was, to hell with you! I'll wear what I want! By the third comment, I was thinking, well, would I wear shorts to church? No, of course not. But later on, toward the end of the program, it seemed the air conditioner had been turned maliciously high.

The program was the main reason I went, because it centered around the gurus. It began with a chant of welcome that lasted through 20 verses – a half hour or so. I had the words on a piece of cardboard and followed phonetically. As I didn't have a cushion to sit cross legged on, I sat on a chair. My thoughts were on whether or not it would hurt Esther's feelings if I caught the bus out that night – the discomfort was very clearly a cover for fear. As the chant went on, I began to feel a little more comfortable, but it wasn't until after the chant I began to settle down. I was forced to smile. There was a short introductory talk by a minor swami – these guys walk around swathed in orange. A couple of wry, happy comments. Everyone seemed to be having a good time. He introduced a second speaker, a British woman dressed in a smart suit – all the women looked quite snappy in cotton blouses and skirts and pants. A stylish group, this. She also had a pleasant talk about her relationship with Gurudev, the brother. Quite a

few things that both she and the swami said were pertinent to me. The swami was talking about walking around the Ganeshpuri ashram wondering why all the devotees were such nasty worms of people – you never know what the shakti will stir up in you. Chuckles all around. The woman was talking about writing and words and having a busy mind, and how Gurudev had been wise and just sat there while she chattered on until her mind quieted, and how once he had given her this look of pure love that had suffused her being with completeness for two or three days, and how his presence in a room, commenting 'this is really a lovely room,' had stayed there days after, when people had come in a panic after Indira Gandhi's assassination – it calmed them. They stood around commenting on, you guessed it, how lovely the room was, and maybe they wouldn't need a passport out of the country, anyway.

There followed a ten minute meditational chant–Om namah shivaya, which means something to the effect of love and honor the self, for I am God. During this chant, the gurus came in. I have to admit, I was pretty excited and pleased and happy to see them, although again I don't know whether I was responding to the fact or the concept of a guru, a spiritually whole and realized being. Everyone was so pleased to see them, how could I help but be myself? Gurudev spoke – Gurumavi didn't say a word. Neither of them were wise and godlike and imposing. Rather, Gurudev would say something, ribbing her a little, and Gurumayi would roll her eyes at him. Just normal folk, like you and me. Gurudev spoke about a certain kind of Indian song, and got us clapping and rocking, and then sang a verse and translated it. For 40 minutes this went on. It was fun, but after a half hour it kind of palled. . .

The basic message of the song was, what are you, Lord, and how can I know you? You are a great mystery. The basic message of Siddha Yoga: we are not moslem, christian, hindu. We are all and none of these. God can be found within the self, and when united with God, the boundaries of self disappear. God is experienced through love. God is love. And so on – perfectly sensible, and unrestricted by righteous insistence. The gurus, they are said to be always happy, often laughing, and full of love. And I don't want you to see this as a cult sort of thing, Elizabeth. I think Siddha Yoga is a healthy pursuit of the divine through immanence. There was no pressure on me at any time to stay, no coercion. The sense of contentment in the community of the ashram was a little frightening, but it was sincere.

After Gurudev sang, we had meditation for 20 minutes. I had a

good meditation. I felt calmed, cleaned, and overwhelmed. At some point during the program, I had a light bulb: I wanted to run away, to go to a friend's in Manhattan or Dad's down here in Ardsley because I felt this fierce need to recollect my ego, to re-establish my boundaries myself. Cate has always been a strong solid person and I wanted to feel myself safe within her protective and somewhat judgmental walls. I think ever since my parents separated when I was seven, I have had the habit of burrowing deep within myself for solace, rather than reaching out for it, and trusting. And from that deep within, I have built around me Cate, who is strong, who is a good person for solace. At the ashram, I felt me in the open air at risk, and I wanted very much to sink into my familiar Cate boundaries. And I knew I couldn't do that at the ashram, because of the strong feel there of openness, devotion, trust and love. So you see why I felt overwhelmed and frightened.

Anyway, my meditation was good. I didn't live in my thoughts. The thoughts were there, rattling through my brain, but I was able to center my consciousness in my gut, which is a quieter, airier place than my mind. After a white, I opened my eyes to the candle in the front of the hall, and I wanted to know what time it was – but I couldn't turn my head. I had lost awareness of my body. My hands were clasped, I knew, but I wasn't aware of them touching, or resting in my lap. This has happened to me before having a good meditation. I felt content.

When it was all over, Esther and I and her sister Chris had dinner, and I still wanted to leave! I didn't want to have to cope with anymore input. I just wanted to sit and be with what I had. I decided to get the 9:55 to NY and went off to collect my luggage, conscious that I was running away because I was frightened, but still urging myself to go, in order to recollect Cate. Common sense got the better of me, though – I was too exhausted to deal with a 2½ hour bus ride, getting into NY after midnight, and all that might entail getting to Cass or Dad's. I stayed, and Esther bustled off to her campsite.

So, I retired to my bedroom and went to bed around 10:30. Some trouble getting to sleep, and thus my roommate got up at 4 for the early a.m. meditation. She took a shower, hung around. There was thunderstorm, a nasty, invigorating one, outside, and I, obviously, wasn't on my way to meditation, so she went back to bed. But I was awake for 2 hours having some pretty heavy thoughts. It is hard to describe the pattern of consciousness during hours like that, but I was aware that there was chanting and meditation going on, and I had the feeling that I ought to go – it

would do me good. But I had promised myself that I wouldn't, and that promise held me safe within my Cateness – taking-care-of-herself. I was – shall I say blessed? – with the sense of how it would be if I went, and if I made a serious commitment to Siddha Yoga. If would mean diminishing my protective sense of self-importance, opening my self to a – into a powerful channel of trust and love. I was very conscious of the connection this has to my fear of trusting a man, involving myself in such an intense personal relationship. This Cateness, it is a treasure, but so it is a curse. So I tossed between my sheets with this awareness of two directions, and I told myself or Cate told me, "you are not ready, yet." That may well have been fear's cop out, but so it goes. Eventually – I was conscious of the moment the sun appeared, because it peaked though our window, ricocheted off our mirror and hit my wall, pazoom. Eventually the thoughts slowed and I calmed myself into sleep. When I woke up, Cate was back demanding that we catch the first bus out of here. And so I checked out and got the 9:40 to New York City, Port Authority.

A THOUGHT ABOUT CHRISTMAS

The deep-lying truth in the Christian idea of Incarnation is that God is immanent in the flow of life. To be God-related is to be optimally aware of this flow within and around us. Hidden among the particulars of daily life are the openings into the way of God . . . these warm sensings over the months and years become new mindsets or action.

A quotation from a friend in Dorothy Steer's pamphlet On listening: To God and To Each Other, *Printed by The Wider Quaker Fellowship.*

Enemies

Our ordinary sense of love and compassion is actually very much involved with attachment. For your own wife or husband, your parents, your children, you have a feeling of compassion and love. But because it is in fact related with attachment, it cannot include your enemies. Again it is centered on a selfish motivation – because these are *my* mother, *my* father, *my* children, I love them. In contrast to this is a clear recognition of the importance and rights of others. If compassion is developed from that viewpoint, it will reach even to enemies.

In order to develop such a motivation of compassion, we must have tolerance, patience. In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher. Your enemy can teach you tolerance whereas your teacher or parents cannot. Thus from this view point, an enemy is actually very helpful – the best of friends, the best of teachers.

In my own experience, the period of greatest gain in knowledge and experience is the most difficult period in one's life. If you go along in an easy way, with everything okay, you feel everything is just fine. Then one day when you encounter problems, you feel depressed and hopeless. Through a difficult period you can learn, you can develop inner strength, determination, and courage to face the problem. Who gives you this chance? Your enemy.

This exerpt is from a talk given by H. H. the Dalai Lama at Constitution Hall in Philadelphia during his recent North American Tour. It is reprinted with permission from Kindness, Clarity, and Insight, *a collection of his talks which we highly recommend. This volume, and other excellent material on Tibetan Buddhism, history, art, and culture, are available from the folks at Snow Lion Press, P.O. Box 6483, Ithaca, NY 14851, USA. Telephone (607) 273-8506*

Discomfort with Sharing Prayer: Fear and the Potential for Healing

By Gordon Dalbey

So then. . . .pray for one another, so that you will be healed (Jas. 5:16).

"We go out and make calls at hospitals and members' homes," a head deacon explained, "but frankly, we're uneasy when it comes time to pray for them."

An experienced pastor, I nevertheless know that uneasiness all too well myself, especially with those I haven't prayed with before. My major fear is simply that my offer to pray might make the person uncomfortable. Even very "active" church members may see themselves as "not too religious," while others may see their faith as "very personal." These persons would be embarrassed to be prayed for aloud; they would see it as breaking the comfortable mood of fellowship and as entering a realm they are either unfamiliar with, and thus fear, or consider private, and thus closed off to others.

Certainly, as Christians, we have the above James text among many others as a license to pray for each other. But God's power can only be ministered out of respect for the other person – that is, by those who submit their license to the Lord as to how and when to use it.

When in doubt, I fall back on a simple rule: If you want to know how someone feels about something, ask. That is, I simply say, "Would it be agreeable if I said a prayer, or would you rather not just now?" If you do ask, be sure that you allow the person full freedom to decline your offer.

Certainly, God wants His people to pray together, but, like the best of parents, God wants His children to say "yes" to His love from the desire of their own hearts, not out of duty or embarrassment. God has given us free will because no one can say "Yes" with their heart unless they are free as well to say "No."

Be wary, therefore, of any impulse in you that urges, "You must pray out loud for this person right now!" If indeed that is a true word from God, the other person will confirm it by saying "Yes" to your open-ended invitation. Should the person decline, you can always pray for him or her later yourself – not just for the person's problem, but for a greater openness in him or her to the fellowship of the Lord in prayer with others.

Some Suggestions

To visit someone in the name of Jesus is to come as a servant, not as a

judge. You are not there to force God on the person but to offer God's loving fellowship. God loves the person whether he or she wants your prayer or not; so must you.

Still, you need not fear offending by offering to pray. You have simply offered to share something very good. If you have truly released your expectations to the Lord and the person is offended, you may trust it comes not from you but very likely from some painful experience out of the person's past with "religion." Praise God for bringing forth the wound, and pray for its healing later.

If you "get a green light" to pray, here are some suggestions to help you proceed.

Be sensitive to the surroundings and minimize distractions. You can ask politely if someone might turn down the TV, close a door, etc. To do so simply says that prayer is important enough to focus your full attention on. On hospital calls, nurses, dieticians and other staff often enter the room unannounced. Feel free to say, "We were just going to have a prayer together – could we have a few minutes now with the patient?" Professional staff are willing to tell you if they must do their task just then, and if not, will return later. Indeed, don't forget that the staff themselves are human beings, and be prepared to let them join you in the prayer, if the patient and staff agree.

Once, I visited a lady in the heart ward and, just as we were about to pray, the cleaning lady walked in, mop bucket and all. With a trace of frustration, I turned to her and said, "We were just about to have a prayer together." To my surprise, she set her bucket down and, with genuine humility, said, "Oh – yes, of course." With that, she bowed her head! Immediately, I asked God's forgiveness for my impatience, and when we joined hands invited her into the circle. Tests on the patient the following day revealed a dramatic healing of her heart, and I believe the cleaning lady had something to do with it.

Joining hands with those present can give a special feeling of togetherness and strength. If you do so, encourage loved ones to be closest to the patient instead of yourself. You may well have an important prayer to offer, but no one can communicate the love of God better than a spouse, child or parent of the patient.

In fact, many families are longing to touch one another in love, but for various reasons are afraid to. If anyone can rightly give permission to touch in healing love, it is a representative of Jesus Christ. Many families are thankful for the opportunity to join hands and would never dare do it without your "outside" encouragement.

Do not underestimate, therefore, the healing potential of simple human touch. Jesus often touched those He healed, and the "laying on of hands" was common practice in the early Church. Anyone who has ever been a baby in mother's womb, where you are touched completely on all sides, knows the sense of security and peace which loving touch can bring – thereby opening the person to the fullness of healing so often inhibited by fear. Certainly, in our own culture we seem terrified of silence as we rush to fill it with muzak, earphones and "canned" TV laughter. Yet, If God is to speak through

us, we must begin in humble silence. If we do not hear God speaking, often it is because we have not stopped speaking long enough to listen. Nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus run; when you're moving in God's path, God's peace moves with you. To rush into prayer communicates fear that God might somehow take off and leave, while the person prayed for needs to know that God in Jesus Christ is with him or her always.

When heads are bowed and you're ready to pray, don't be afraid to be silent at first to gather yourself and wait upon the Lord, If, as Jesus says, the spirit of God is like the wind (Jn. 3:8), then we dare not leap out from where we stand until the "wind of the Spirit" is there. As Isaiah put it,

> But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (49:31)

A suitable interpretation here would be, "they shall pray and not get lost in their own thoughts and words." In faithful prayer, we spread our wings as we open our hearts to God's Word among us – and we wait in order that God's Spirit uplift us and carry us in His direction.

Indeed, as the person hears others praying, he or she may well be encouraged to pray for him or herself in a new way. Your job is to point the way, helping the person get into closer relationship with God. "Give me a fish and I eat for a day," as the saying goes; "teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime." Praying yourself for a person may well provide what he or she needs to make it through the day, but the God of love wants His children to seek relationship with Him themselves to discover true life.

When appropriate, encourage the person being prayed for to pray for others. While only the doctors can certify a medical cure, the ultimate sense of spiritual cure comes when the person sees him or herself as "strong enough" to demonstrate care for others. Agnes Sanford likens the process of healing to electricity flowing through a bulb: the bulb lights up only if the current passes into and out beyond the filament. Especially encourage the person to pray for others whose condition is similar to his or hers; beyond the special uplift to the person praying, no one can pray quite as effectively for healing in a situation as one who has already experienced such a healing him or herself.

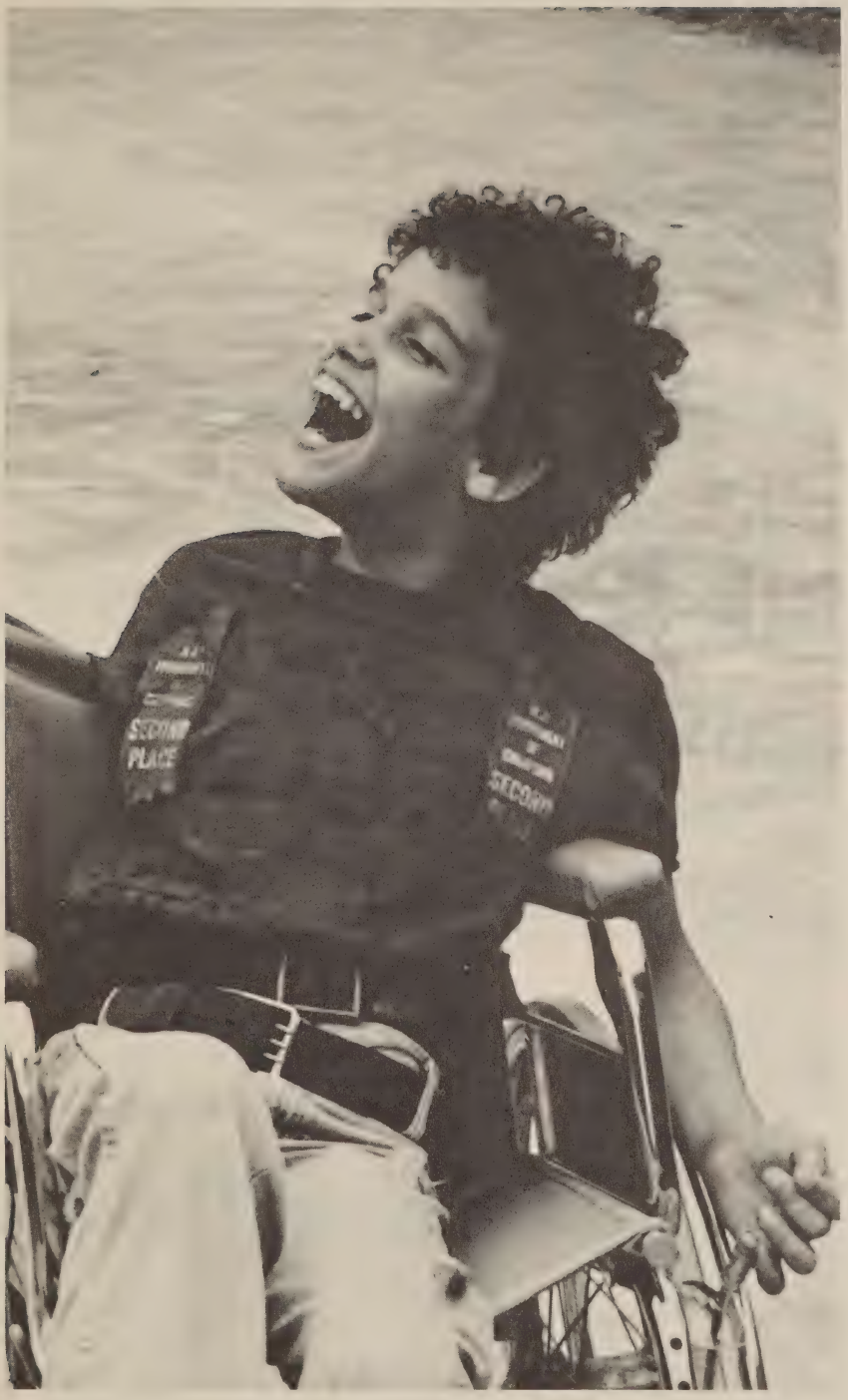
Ultimately, therefore, as you draw near to the Lord to pray for others, asking Him to come among you and do His healing, you place your own self in a position to receive blassings as well. Often I have felt down or upset about something in my own life, and even considered allowing that to "disqualify" me from praying for others. Yet, as I have laid my own problems at the Cross and simply gone ahead as faithfully and obediently as possible to pray with the other person for his or her needs, I have come away lightened and, in may cases, genuinely healed of my own brokenness at that time.

The God you bring to others simply awaits your prayer invitation to enter, and your heart-felt desire for Him to work the fullness of His desire for all present. For our God has blessings to pour out upon us that none of us in our limited human minds can even begin to imagine.

My task is not
to seek for love,
but merely
to seek and find
all the barriers
within myself
that I have built
against it.

Love waits on
welcome
not on time.

Elda Hartley
Perennial Wisdom


SECOND
PLACE

Notes on Our Contributors

Elda Hartley has produced a number of award-winning films about major religions of the world. The calligraphic page printed in *Fellowship in Prayer* comes from her lovely book *Perennial Wisdom,* which draws from the spirit of great world religions in a text which remains relevant to anyone's daily life. We recommend this book as a devotional text. *Perennial Wisdom* is the narration of her film *Perennial Philosophy,* which is available to rent in film or video. For more information about her films or book, write to the Hartley Film Foundation, 59 Catrock Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807.

We are thankful to Emily Sargent Councilman, a Trustee of Fellowship in Prayer, for bringing the remarkable life of Peace Pilgim to our attention. Peace Pilgrim awakened and inspired many thousands of people during her joyful walk across the country for peace from 1953 to 1981. She carried to all people a message of peace expressed so simply: "When enough of us find inner peace, our institutions will become more peaceful and there will be no more occasion for war." A book of Peace Pilgrim's own words was put together after her death by Peace Pilgrim's friends, who have made the book free to any who want it. To obtain this book by a remarkable woman, write to Friends of Peace Pilgrim, 13719 Tedemory, Whittier, CA 90602.

"A Thought About Christmas" is taken from Dorothy Steere's quotation of a friend in her pamphlet "On Listening: To God and To Each Other." This pamphlet is published by the Wider Quaker Fellowship. For more information, write to Betsy Dearborn, Friends World Committe, 1506 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Evelyne Lein lives in Fresno, California. After many years in the banking profession, she is a full-time homemaker. . . turned writer. Her other interests are music, education for Native Americans, and preserving endangered wildlife.

"Repetition" is reprinted with permission from *Meditation: An Eight-Point Program* by Eknath Easwaran and published by Nilgiri Press of Petaluma, California 94953. Easwaran is the author of many helpful books on the spiritual life including: *Gandhi, the Man, A Man to Match His Mountains, The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living,* and many more.

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Edward Miller has given generously of his time, energy, and patience to Fellowship in Prayer. His devotion to truth provides a continuing witness to that reality which lies at the center of our lives. As of December, 1985, Ed will leave Fellowship in Prayer to devote his time to fundraising for the Akwesasne Freedom School of the Mohawk Nation. Also he will work with organizing the Tree of Peace Ceremony mentioned in a recent issue of Fellowship in Prayer. Readers who are interested in helping out can contact Ed through the Fellowship in Prayer office. Our affection and best wishes go with him.

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